



Oregon/Washington Bureau of Land Management Partnership Strategy

PURPOSE

In the face of declining fiscal and personnel resources, organizations of all kinds are placing a new emphasis on partnerships. Partnerships have proven to be an effective means of leveraging resources among cooperating organizations, improving working relationships, and fostering trust. To meet the challenges of changing demographics, environmental factors, economics and community values, the Bureau of Land Management must continue to pursue successful, mission-driven partnerships. Oregon/Washington Bureau Land Management (OR/WA BLM) currently has numerous “partnerships”, some of which are informal while others are formalized by means of Memorandums of Understanding, Memorandums of Assistance, Assistance Agreements (including Cooperative and Technical Assistance Agreements), and/or Partnership Agreements. As expected, most of these agreements fall in the natural resources arena, but they also exist in other program areas such as environmental education, records, and personnel.

The purpose of this Strategy is to provide a more consistent, coordinated approach to BLM partnerships across the region. The Strategy is intended to be a management tool to help focus where we invest our time, energy and funding while still retaining flexibility and local decision-making at the field level.

BACKGROUND

More than ever, stewardship of our natural and cultural resources, along with places set aside for recreation and education, requires shared responsibility. The Secretary’s 4Cs agenda (conservation through cooperation, communication, and consultation), Take Pride in America initiative, and the interagency pledge signed by seven agency heads at the Joint Ventures: Partners in Stewardship Conference all point to a national goal to find more effective ways to forge connections between agencies and communities.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s the United States was focused on western expansion. Homesteads and ranches were established and the General Land Office was created to keep track of the land transactions. Then we began the progressive era of professionals managing federal lands – “we’re from the government, we are experts, we are here to help!” It was a top-down management style, where government experts controlled the information and made all the decisions.

In the 1960s and 1970s, we witnessed the growth of the environmental movement. The National Environmental Policy Act prescribed a formal structure for public participation, but the government still largely controlled the information. People had to drive to a federal office to look at records, or ask that it be sent to them through the mail. Public participation was often via the courthouse.

Today we know that court-ordered, conflict driven land management is not the answer. The West is becoming an area of growing cities and suburbs, upscale recreation areas and gated communities among economically struggling towns, farms and ranches. These urban populations place new demands on our public lands – solitude, recreation and open space. The other significant change is communications technology – the internet, text messages, cell phones with photographic capabilities are a way of life for many people. These trends are transforming the relationship of the public and the government. People want to participate and be involved in the land that they consider their backyard – they are educated and unwilling to leave it to the experts. To be more effective, OR/WA BLM must shift to shared stewardship and collaborative management of our public lands.

VISION

OR/WA BLM is to build more sustainable, effective and mission-driven partnerships across the region.

GOALS

- Forge long-term relationships with diverse partners;
- Measure and communicate partnership achievements;
- Empower partners to share in stewardship responsibilities;
- Capitalize on and build from existing successful partnerships.

DEFINITION

Building positive relationships and good will is critical to developing trust and credibility in local communities. Although these community efforts are very important, this document is focused on partnerships that are established in order to complete a project or mutual goal. In this Strategy, a partnership is identified as

“a cooperative venture between two or more parties who leverage resources to accomplish a mutually beneficial project or move in a mutual direction consistent with the BLM mission.”

It is important to note that not all partnership work is done on-the-ground. Because partnerships have a huge amount of diversity and an array of different types of groups/organizations, projects could also include planning, information gathering, or educating – in other words, the goal is to get something measurable accomplished.

In addition, partners can also be volunteers. Voluntary collaboration among organizations and individuals exists in virtually every partnership. Volunteers are a valuable asset and help make projects and programs happen. They model the important principle of citizen stewardship, helping BLM maintain the health of our public lands, participating in community-based planning, and executing the implementation of projects.

PARTNERSHIP/VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

The role of the coordinator is strategic in nature and concentrates on coordination with the Washington Office, State Office, and key field staff. The primary functions of the coordinator include: problem solving and issue resolution, technical assistance, information sharing, reporting, and training.

The partnership/volunteer coordinator responsibilities are as follows:

National-

- Work closely with WO representatives (including the BLM 4Cs Coordinator, National Landscape Conservation Office, Public Affairs Office, and the Environmental Education and Volunteers Office) to develop and implement national policies and report back on programs relating to partnership accomplishments region-wide.

State Office-

- Serve as the statewide point of contact for Oregon/Washington BLM's partnership, volunteer and environmental education programs.
- Provide strategic advice and guidance to the State Director, Associate State Director, Deputy State Directors, and line managers on high profile issues and partnership activities.
- Coordinate with State Office program leads including Management and Budget, Division of Resources (Planning, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, Fire and Aviation), Division of Management Services (Procurement, Personnel, Realty and Records) regarding partnership management and issues.
- Work closely with other state and federal agencies, with particular emphasis on the Forest Service, to benefit from existing opportunities for efficiency. Participate as a member of the Forest Service Partnership Core Team.
- Coordinate and manage a small number of partnership and volunteer programs that have a statewide scope, including National Public Lands Day, Oregon Plan Outreach Team, SOLV, and Wolfree, Inc. Work closely with State Office program leads to develop initial partnerships needs and requirements, then transition entire management over to program lead, providing support on an as needed basis.
- Organize and conduct training for State and District Office personnel in partnership development and management.

District Offices-

- Offer advice and technical assistance in the development of informational materials, including brochures, videos, and news releases to be used in promoting partnership activities and interacting with hard-to-reach audiences.
- Upon request, review partnership plans for consistency with national and state office strategies and provides assistance to resolve issues.
- Provide guidance on policies, initiatives, agreements, funding sources and key contacts.

SELECTION GUIDELINES

The Partnership selection guidelines listed below are similar to a corporate philosophy and may be used to determine whether partnerships are consistent with identified priority areas. Managers retain the flexibility to enter into any partnership effort that they feel is important; however, the guidelines are a tool to help them evaluate and match-up limited staff time, energy and funding with workload priorities. The guidelines are a check-list and are not intended to be weighted or ranked. This corporate philosophy approach also allows the agency to say “no” to partnerships that do not adequately meet the BLM’s mission or priorities. It is important to note that closure of a partnership does not imply failure. As partnership projects are completed, it is a good idea for partnership leads or managers to look back over the project to assess the partnership’s strengths and accomplishments, and look forward to determine the next steps.

- ☐ Restores and maintains the health of the land
- ☐ Serves current and future publics
- ☐ Improves organizational effectiveness
- ☐ Provides for a quality recreation experience
- ☐ Supports a national plan or initiative
- ☐ Accomplishes land and resource conservation or restoration objectives
- ☐ Provides trust building and positive agency image
- ☐ Educates the public about natural resource values
- ☐ Fills a void in workforce planning
- ☐ Encourages shared stewardship of public lands

PARTNERSHIP INVENTORY

OR/WA BLM receives numerous, regular requests for project accomplishments and reporting information from the Department of the Interior and BLM Washington Office. In addition, the State Director often needs detailed information to make policy decisions. These requests are usually on a short turn around and require specific facts and successes in order to give OR/WA BLM adequate credit.

An OR/WA BLM partnership inventory system will be developed to provide a comprehensive look at partnerships across the region. This inventory will provide measurable results of the partnership program, such as project elements, lead contact(s), accomplishments, and funding commitments. This information will be critical to conducting partnership evaluations; determining how much of our budget is allocated to partnerships and how much is brought in; whether partner groups are being funded by multiple districts; and whether there is enough equity among the different program areas.

INCENTIVES

A variety of incentives will be offered to both managers and staff in order to encourage partnership development and/or growth.

- Partnership work will be listed as an Oregon/Washington BLM priority area;
- Partnership work will be outlined in performance reviews;
- An Oregon/Washington BLM award program will be implemented;
- A seed money program will be established to assist with partnership capacity building;
- Public relations efforts will be increased to highlight partnership accomplishments.

RESOURCES – ASSISTANCE

OR/WA BLM already has numerous effective, mission-driven partnerships across the region; however, it is the State Director's expectation that staff will continue to pursue innovative ways to build-upon and grow more partnership accomplishments. Several types of resources will be provided to assist staff with capacity building.

Web-based tool box, updated every 30 days, will contain:

- Information on national (Department of the Interior, BLM Washington Office) initiatives and policies
- Latest procurement and budget policies
- Examples of Memorandums of Understanding, agreements, contracts
- Potential funding sources (grants, corporate sponsors, county payments)
- List of BLM and partners contacts
- Case studies with good examples and lessons learned
- List of statewide BLM partnerships that districts can join
- List of partnerships with other agencies, such as the Forest Service, which BLM could become a cooperator, instead of starting a new, separate agreement
- Bulletin board for information sharing, peer review and assistance
- List of BLM contacts with specific expertise in partnerships
- Links to related sites

Training will include:

- Partnership courses through the BLM National Training Center, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center, the National Park Service, the Association of Partners for Public Lands, the Cispus Workshop, and Colleges/Universities
- Workshops on BLM budget, procurement and volunteer administration
- On-line and interagency opportunities

A list of contacts will be provided to:

- Facilitate a mechanism for information exchange
- Assist with specific issues

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

DATE	ACTION	DETAILS
JAN 2004 COMPLETED	1. Create a statewide partnership/volunteer coordinator position Objective: Specify coordinator roles and responsibilities.	1a. Allow flexibility to respond to results of field input. 1b. Include coordination with other agencies and pursue Service First opportunities, where applicable. 1c. Describe how this position will work with the National, State and Field Offices – including statewide coordination of the volunteer and environmental education programs.
MAY - JUNE 2004 COMPLETED	2. Interview managers and program leads Objective: Align field staff needs and interests with the statewide partnership strategy components. Encourage a common understanding and overall support of the Strategy.	2a. Gain feedback on proposed selection guidelines, tracking/inventory, incentives. 2b. Identify resource/assistance needs. 2c. Discuss need for and identification of field team or local contacts. 2d. Reevaluate proposed strategic actions. 2e. Provide a report/analysis during the June 14 SLT Conference Call. 2f. Revise Action Plan
JUNE 2004 COMPLETED	3. Revise Strategy Objective: Make changes based on input from meetings with district staff, state office program leads and branch chiefs.	3a. Incorporate importance of community relations efforts. 3b. Compile suggested Selection Guidelines. 3c. Acknowledge the need for local contacts, awards/recognition program, seed money, inventory system, and training.
JULY 2004	4. Finalize Strategy Objective: Demonstrate which actions will be taken in order to create a more consistent, coordinated approach to BLM partnerships across the region.	4a. Incorporate Selection Guidelines. 4a. Make a downloadable copy available on the Oregon State Office Intranet.

DATE	ACTION	DETAILS
JULY 2004	5. Provide Instruction Memorandum Objective: Demonstrate a new statewide emphasis on partnerships. Make clear that a Strategy has been developed and that the strategic actions being implemented.	5a. Describe the vision and goals of the Strategy. 5b. Include information on statewide coordinator role, why a new emphasis on partnerships and an overview of strategic actions (selection guidelines, incentives, tracking/inventory, resources and assistance).
AUG - DEC 2004	6. Establish a seed money program Objective: Assist staff with capacity building and partnership development costs.	6a. Develop an application and selection process. 6b. Identify an internal funding source. 6c. Share partnership information as a case study, providing a source for success stories/lessons learned. Use in public relations efforts to highlight/recognize partnership accomplishments.
JAN 2005	7. Identify tasks underway at national level, which support OR/WA strategic actions Objective: Adopt national tools and avoid duplication.	7a. Identified in 3-Year Work Plan for National 4-Cs Coordinator such as workload measures, performance elements, and individual recognition.
JAN - JULY 2005 (on-going)	8. Develop and construct web-based tool box Objective: Provide a single place to find partnership information and resources, specific to BLM, in order to promote partnership development and effective management.	8a. Information to include: Current WO and OR/WA policies/initiatives; templates/examples of MOUs, contracts, agreements; alternative funding sources, BLM and partner contacts, links to related sites, case studies, list of region-wide partnerships. 8b. Training opportunities 8c. BLM local contacts 8d. Updated at least every 30 days
JAN 2005	9. Identify field team – local contacts Objective: Recognize those with specific expertise in partnerships and facilitate a means for information exchange.	9a. District Manager to identify field level contact(s). 9b. Continue use of already established communication networks (i.e. Recreation, Wildlife, Botany).

DATE	ACTION	DETAILS
JAN - SEPT 2005 DD: DEC 2005	10. Design and implement partnership inventory Objective: Provide a mechanism to gather information and data for reporting requirements and issue management.	10a. Determine reporting requirements, using a simple approach. 10b. Identify type of system (web-based spreadsheet, word document). 10c. Assign a reporting due date (annually).
APRIL - JUNE 2005	11. Coordinate a review of statewide and district partnerships. Objective: Determine whether any partnerships do not meet the vision and goals of the Strategy.	11a. Review statewide and district partnerships, using new strategy. 11b. Make any recommendation(s) on changes to partnership agreements.
JAN - SEPT 2005	12. Establish an OR/WA BLM partnership awards/recognition program. Objective: Provide and incentive to encourage and recognize partnership accomplishments.	12a. Design an OR/WA BLM specific nomination and selection process. 12b. Identify an internal funding source. 12c. Implement recognition events at both the district and state level.
On-going	13. Provide training opportunities Objective: Provide skills to build new partnerships and foster shared stewardship.	13a. Pursue on-line and interagency training opportunities. 13b. Offer administrative training focused on procurement, budget, volunteers.